

THE BREEDING PLACE OF *DERMESTES ELONGATUS* LECONTE.

On a recent visit to the breeding colony of the Black Crowned Night Heron near the Receiving Reservoir, D. C., in search of insects associated with these birds, Mr. R. C. Shannon found the still occupied nests swarming with Dermestid larvae. Three adults were taken, which prove to be *Dermestes elongatus* Lec. nec Hope (= ? *bicolor* Fabr.), a species which appears to have been so seldom taken that the records, as far as the writer has found are best mentioned here:—

1854 LeConte described it from "Georgia, rare."

1875 Schwarz listed a specimen from Haulover, Fla.

1882 Jayne recorded it from Southern and Western States.

1894 Hamilton mentioned the distribution of this species as extensive:—

New York, Canada, Kansas, Texas, Georgia, Florida. (St. Augustine *in litt.*)

1900 Casey gave Indiana as the locality of his material.

1902 Ulke recorded a specimen found under bark at Washington, D. C.

1910 Blatchley mentioned a record from near Cincinnati, but omitted Casey's Indiana record.

The unpublished records on the material in the National Collection are as follows:—

Texas:—A series of specimens collected by G. W. Belfrage in the early seventies.

Florida:—One specimen taken at Palm Beach by Dr. H. G. Dyar.

California:—One specimen beaten from a beaver skin in San Francisco, by A. Koebele about 1885.

The specific synonymy in this genus is in almost hopeless confusion and for this reason no new name is offered to supplant LeConte's homonym. Hope's name, proposed twenty years before LeConte's use of the same name, is now listed as a synonym of *peruvianus* Cast., but Jayne was of the opinion that LeConte's species might be identical with *bicolor* Fabr., of whose habits Rosenhauer says that it often lives in the nests of pigeons where the larvae sometimes eat into the young pigeons and kill them. The larvae of some other species of the genus are known to breed in the nests of tree inhabiting caterpillars, for instance, *Dermestes tessellatus* Fabr., in the nests of the Brown tail moth, and *D. aurichalceus* Kst., in those of two other common European nest making caterpillars.

We are too apt to take the habits of the well-known, economic (and therefore conspicuous) species as applicable to the less known species of a group, more particularly so in an unattractive genus like *Dermestes*, and it is well to point out that there are probably quite diverse breeding habits even among these closely allied species. The writer believes that the normal breeding place of this species will prove to be in the nests of birds, particularly fish-eating species.

—Herbert S. Barber.